HPS Administrative Review (2013): List of Recommendations and Implementation Timelines

* ***Note: A full understanding of the recommendations listed below require the careful review of the full HPS Administrative Review (2013)***

#	Recommendation	Implementation Timelines	
		Begin	End
The Continued Alignment of Administrative Practices			
1	**Aligning internal administrative job functions and practices**		
	a) The HSD should consider aligning the job portfolios of Contract Analysts by service delivery agent; not by funding stream.	Q1 2014	April 1, 2014
	b) The HSD should continue to align the contract management procedures administering all homelessness programming, regardless of funding source. Specific components in need of alignment are: **i. In-person monitoring schedules (the timing of monitoring events)** **ii. Payments (the timing of payments)** **iii. Financial Reporting (the timing of financial reporting)**	Q1 2014	April 1, 2015
	c) The HSD should establish with the Finance Department a coordinated approach for the exchange of financial forecasting information. This free exchange of information about cash flow projections can be facilitated through the development of a coordinated and relational database in an updated Information Management System	Q4 2014	**Complete**
2	**Alignment of person-centered administrative practices with the HSD's principle of person-centered programming**		

	a) The HSD should continue to work towards a person-centered approach to administrating and monitoring HPS projects. The HSD should (as much as possible) offer a 'one-window approach' in administering programs, meaning a single point of contact should be established for all homelessness programming offered through a 3rd party agency, regardless of funding source.	Q1 2014	April 1, 2014
	b) The HSD should implement a 'one-window/one-form approach' for reporting timelines & monitoring forms. This means that ideally, 3rd party agencies should approach one administrator, with one set of monitoring results, once per reporting period. The HSD, not the 3rd party agency, should then take the additional step to internalize and coordinate the dispersion of information by funding source requirements. • **Using the forms borrowed from the City of Ottawa, the HSD should develop a similar integrated set of reporting forms.**	Q1-Q4 2014	April 1, 2015
3	**Aligning administrative practices with more regular policy and/or data analysis supports**		
	a) The HSD should more closely align the work of the Contracts Analysts in collecting HPS program data/information with the work of the Policy/Program Analysis. Viable options may include: • **Quarterly 'impact meetings' structured around reviewing high level monitoring results** • **Assigning and number of hours per month of policy/data support to a Contracts Analyst's portfolio**	Q1 2014	Q3 2014

Coordination of Monitoring Processes			
4	**Creating Monitoring Plans**		
	a) Monitoring activities should be scheduled as part of a plan developed by the Contracts Analyst with consultation and advice of the Program Manager at the beginning of a project's contract. The monitoring plan and monitoring schedule should be informed by the community planning timelines of the individual agency. <See Recommendation #2> **The plan should include five main components:** **1. Identification of project risks** **i. Some risks may include: the level of agency's accounting experience/expertise, an account of previous pressures, cash flow issues, capital needs, staff retention problems, staff training needs etc.** **2. Identification of weaknesses and strengths of the project including an assessment of the evolving capacity of the organization** **3. Development of strategies to address ongoing project challenges** **4. A review of project outcomes to-date and projections (if applicable); establishing timelines and discussing key project outcome milestones** **5. As a result of the information gathered from (a, b, c, d) a plan of the frequency and depth of 'in-person' site visits should be established**	Q1 2014	April 1, 2014
5	**Monitoring plans should be available and accessible to the entire Homelessness Policy & Programs team. *<See Recommendation #3>***	Q3 2014	April 1, 2015
6	**There should be a renewed focus on monitoring program data & information related to project outcomes, not project activities.**	Q1 2014	April 1, 2014

7	**The responsibility of financial outcome tracking should fall to the Contracts Analyst and staff.**	Q1 2014	April 1, 2014
	a) Progress related to financial outcome monitoring should be regularly shared with the City of Hamilton's Finance Department (cash flow projections).	Q1-Q2 2014	Q2 2014
8	**Develop new outcome monitoring tools & consolidate current monitoring tools**		
	a) Modelling tools, tracking tools and visualizations should be developed to regularly track financial outcomes. These tools would be mainly to measure whether project spending is on track to meet quarterly/annual targets. They may provide additional uses as policy and planning tools.	Q1 2014	Q2/Q3 2014
	b) The 2 activity & 2 financial monitoring forms should be combined into 1 form. They should also be scaled down, aligned under meeting what would be required using a quarterly advanced payments process and restructured to focus on outcomes, not activities. These forms should be completed and submitted by agencies electronically. *** This is a significant piece of work and is an opportunity to combine efforts and skills within the team. <*See Recommendation #3*> – led by the Contracts Analyst(s) and Program/Data Analysts with support from the Program Manager and team Policy Analysts.**	Q2-Q4 2014	April 1, 2015
	c) Completed versions should be accessible to and intentionally shared with team members	Q1 2015	April 1,2015
	Payments		
9	**Convert to a payment's system using advanced quarterly payments**	Q1 2014	April 1, 2014
	a) Using the reporting forms borrowed from the City of Ottawa, the HSD should develop a similar set of reporting/monitoring forms to facilitate this conversion.	Q1 2014	April 1, 2014

10	**Establish hard reporting deadlines for the submission of financial (and activity) monitoring information from 3rd party agencies.**	Q1 2014 (process)	Q2 2014
	Modernization of Program Records – Organization, Quantity & Quality		
11	**Improve Organization of Program Records: Create a reorganized & viable Information Management System for HPS. Some of the major steps will include:**		
	a) Transitioning all Program Records from Paper to Electronic. • **All forms used in future iterations of HPS should be converted to electronic forms;** • **All forms requiring signature should be scanned and included in a well-managed electronic file;**	Q1-Q4 2014	April 2015
	b) Much of the work in administering a HPS Sub-Project agreement includes keeping a living document of the project. A process should be developed to keep an easily accessible/readable living document in the electronic version of the file. • **In the case of managing monitoring forms, a keyword index could be created to speed up electronic searches – organized properly, using a simple CTRL+F keyword search of "Amendment" would quickly retrieve all Amendments to a project.**	Q1 2015	Beyond 2015
	c) Explore the use of creating a Relational Database **for comparing and aggregating outcome data/information from the Data Tool with financial monitoring results. An optimal database would also include information related to project appointments and billing as well.** *** A relational database is a set of tables that are related and linked to each other by common variables.**	Q1 2015	Beyond 2015

	d) Training Program staff to administer the HPS program using the new electronic database and forms	Q4 2014	April 1, 2015 (forms) Beyond 2015 (database)
12	**Improve Quality of Program Records: A project is undertaken to convert all existing monitoring forms to 'smart forms' using drop-down menus, checkboxes and auto-text where applicable and converted to their appropriate file type (.doc to .xls). They should be formatted and protected as well as 'version controlled'.**	Q1-Q4 2014	April 1, 2015
	Some strategies to improve the quality of program records include: **Strategy #1** – Schedule B submissions are submitted using a mix of Excel and Word formats. A standardized Excel based template and procedure would allow for direct comparison, simple trend analyses and build an environment which could lead to the creation of a relational database. **Strategy #2** – Financial Monitoring forms are in Word format and require 3rd party agencies to answer a series of 40-60 'Yes' or 'No' questions. There is currently no way of comparing these answers across time or across projects without physically having all the documents in front of you and counting the number of positive or negative responses.[1] These forms should be revised. **Strategy #3** – To answer the Question: "How many amendments have been made to the contract of Project A?" would require accessing the handwritten log of amendments and tallying the number of amendments by hand. An electronic information management system would allow for simple frequency counts. **Strategy #4** – For the Data Tool, construct a model which automatically aggregates monthly and annual data.	Q1 2014 – Q1 2015	April 1, 2015 April 1, 2015 April 1, 2015 Q4 2014

[1] Note: Much of the monitoring forms contain question boxes which are formatted for 'Yes' or 'No' responses, but actually require open ended responses. This should be standardized.

	a) Conditional formatting tools in Excel should be used to as progress indicators to assist Contracts Analysts with project monitoring.	Q1 2014	April 1, 2015
	b) All paper or hand-written forms should be eliminated other than original signed Sub-Project Agreements.	Q1 2014	April 1, 2015
13	**Quantity of Program Records: Program staff should identify where duplications are being made, then during the conversion to a 100% electronic process eliminate redundant forms, combine multiple forms into a single form where possible, and remove unnecessary content within each form**. *Key Questions:* *1. Is this information necessary to satisfy the City's minimum reporting requirements to Service Canada?* *2. Will tracking this information ultimately improve the City of Hamilton's ability to achieve reductions in chronic or episodic homelessness?* **Example of Potential Form Elimination**: The "Case Fly" form should be eliminated. It is nothing more than a diary. It can be replaced by keeping versions of amendments housed & saved electronically. **Example of Potential Form Combination**: There are two separate forms for "initial" and two separate forms for "ongoing" activity and financial monitoring. The content of these pairs of forms are almost exactly the same. These four (4) forms could be combined into (1) one electronic form as the financial and activity monitoring tasks are typically carried out at the same time by Staff. The form could just simply be separated into 2 sections. **Example of Reducing Content within Forms**: In the Schedule A.1 form, agencies are asked to report on Outcomes & Outputs. The evaluator found that staff simply 'Copy & Paste' responses that overlap in each section. Therefore, it makes sense to combine sections where applicable and eliminate duplicate responses	Q1 2014	April 1, 2015

14	**Review the ability to manipulate the Data Tool in such a way to create a customizable format for each project to use based on their unique services/activities.**	Q1 2014	April 1, 2015
	a) Customization should be considered specifically for the use of Housing First projects and for gender specific projects	Q1 2014	April 1, 2015